

Raising Your Child Alcohol Free

A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO ADDRESS UNDERAGE DRINKING



Office of Substance Abuse
Department of Health and Human Services

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner

This guide for healthcare providers was developed to open the door for non-judgmental discussions with parents and youth about underage drinking. It offers age appropriate talking points and suggestions to help you approach the subject of underage alcohol use. Included is information on how to proactively parent to prevent underage drinking with children ages 0-21.

This information is broken down into nine sections:

1. KNOW THE MESSAGES YOU ARE SENDING YOUR CHILD	1
2. TEACH SELF-HELP SKILLS (LIKE PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING)	2
3. TALK ABOUT THE HARM OF USING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS	3
4. GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS AND THEIR PARENTS	4
5. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S USE OF ELECTRONICS	5
6. SET RULES AND CONSEQUENCES ABOUT THE USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS	6
7. DECREASE YOUR CHILD'S ACCESS TO ALCOHOL	7
8. EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE TRENDS AND DANGERS OF YOUTH ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE	8
9. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL WELL-BEING	9

APPENDICES

START TALKING, KEEP LISTENING: THE SIX G's	11
A mnemonic aid for evaluating a patient's vulnerability to underage drinking.	
CRAFT	15
A valid and reliable screening tool to use with adolescents to help providers determine the need for further assessment and treatment or prevention services.	
HOW TO FIND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES IN MAINE	16
A resource page on how to locate treatment and support services throughout the state, via web site or free telephone call.	

Stopping underage drinking and its harm requires an effort by many. As a healthcare provider, you are an important member in a network of many who are working to keep youth healthy.

KNOW THE MESSAGES YOU ARE SENDING YOUR CHILD

- Be a good role model. Children form their beliefs about substance use more on the basis of their parents' actions than on the basis of their parents' words.¹
- Be sure your attitudes and actions support what you tell your child or you may be sending mixed messages.
- If you think you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs, talk to your physician – it's OK to ask for help.

Consider this:

- Several studies have demonstrated that early adolescents are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and use other drugs when their parents engage in these behaviors or when parents directly or indirectly communicate that these behaviors are normative and common²
- There is growing evidence that modeling influences may be operating during the grade-school years. Grade-school children can identify alcoholic beverages, they can report perceived norms and stereotypes of use, and by third grade they can report reliable and valid alcohol expectancies, which are known to be risk factors for early adolescent drinking. Grade school children describe their parents as the primary source of their information about alcohol.³

TEACH SELF-HELP SKILLS (LIKE PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING)

- Teach your child how to talk about their feelings.
- Help your child understand the consequences of their decisions and how to choose the best course of action.
- Give your child new experiences to help him/her understand others.
- Help your child prioritize their choices.

Consider this:

- Children who resist early drug experimentation are generally adept at problem-solving and self-help.⁴
- Children who are taught problem solving skills are better able to choose appropriate solutions to social conflicts.⁵
- To avoid decisions that are rushed and based on little more than a desire for fun and peer approval, teens need a solid basis for making wise choices.⁶

TALK ABOUT THE HARM OF USING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

- Ask if they have learned about alcohol and other drugs in school or have seen messages and ads on TV or in magazines.
- Correct the media's message that drinking is glamorous and drinkers have more fun than non-drinkers.
- Use news on the topic to start a discussion with your child.
- Tell your teen most kids do not drink.

Consider this:

- The human brain does not fully develop until after age 21. Any alcohol use before age 21 can significantly harm your child's brain.
- Alcohol interferes with an adolescent's ability to make sound judgments, and increase the risk of:
 - Alcohol poisoning
 - Unplanned sexual behavior
 - Unintentional accidents and injury
 - Carrying out or being a victim of physical or sexual assault
 - Suicide
 - Car crashes

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS AND THEIR PARENTS

- Take time to talk with your child's friends every time they visit your home.
- Introduce yourself to other parents. Find out what rules you have in common.
- Volunteer to help parents supervise teen gatherings or provide refreshments.

Consider this:

- Adolescents who are highly monitored by their parents are less likely to be involved with alcohol initially or become involved with alcohol over time.⁷



MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S USE OF ELECTRONICS

- Keep the computer and television your child uses in a place you can easily view.
- Monitor the Instant and Text Messages they send and receive.
- Caution your teen about posting information or pictures of themselves on the Internet.
- Tell your teen that employers and college recruiters are looking at sites like MySpace and Facebook before they interview potential candidates.

Consider this:

- Sixty-two percent of parents of online teens say they have checked up on where a child has gone online.⁸
- In families where at least one parent is not an internet user, the computer is more likely to be in a private space like a child's bedroom.⁹
- Teens and parents agree that "most teens do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about."¹⁰

SET RULES AND CONSEQUENCES ABOUT THE USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

- Tell your child that you expect him/her not to drink.
- Consistently enforce rules with appropriate consequences.
- Periodically inquire about other risky behaviors, and let your child know that you expect him/her to not take chances with alcohol.
- Help your child develop strategies to be able to say “no” without feeling self-conscious.

Consider this:

- Following rules can help protect your child’s physical safety and mental well-being, and lowers his/her risk for substance abuse problems.¹¹

DECREASE YOUR CHILD’S ACCESS TO ALCOHOL

- Monitor the amount of alcohol you keep in your home.
- When hosting your child’s party, make sure there is adult supervision and alcohol isn’t accessible.

Consider this:

- While only eight percent of parents of children aged 12-20 indicated that they allowed their teen and his/her friends to drink with supervision in the past six months, 21 percent of teens attended a party where the alcohol was provided by someone else’s parents.¹²
- Underage drinking is estimated to account for between 12% and 20% of the U.S. alcohol market.¹³



EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE TRENDS AND DANGERS OF YOUTH ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE

- Know the dangers associated with underage drinking such as accidents, school failure, unwanted pregnancy, violence and other issues.
- Learn the signs of alcohol and drug use and what you can do.
- Get involved by attending parent and community meetings about underage drinking.

Consider this:

- Alcohol can cause changes in the structure and function of the developing brain, especially when kids drink heavily.¹⁴
- Over one-third of the children in the present study believed that their parents would not know if they were drinking alcohol. It is important, therefore, that interventions to prevent alcohol use by children increase parental awareness of the prevalence and implications of alcohol use during childhood and engage parents in actively monitoring children's access to and opportunities to use alcohol."¹⁵

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL WELL-BEING

- Understand that depression and anxiety are risk factors for alcohol problems because some people use drinking to cope.
- If you think your child might have a mental health problem, do not delay seeking professional help.

Consider this:

- Alcohol may be related to suicide in several ways:

Alcohol use may precede and lead to depression in young people and depression is the leading risk factor for suicidal behavior¹⁶

The wall of resistance to death may be lowered¹⁷

Inhibitions may be reduced and judgment is impaired¹⁸

There are many good reasons for teens not to use alcohol and no good reason to start

For more information, visit www.MaineParents.net

¹ The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. (March 2005) *Family Matters: Substance Abuse and The American Family. A CASA White Paper*. New York, NY: CASA. <http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/380-Family%20Matters.pdf>

² Macaulay, A. P., Griffin, K. W., Gronewold, E., Williams, C., & Botvin, G. J. (2005, June) Parenting Practices and Adolescent Drug-Related Knowledge, Attitudes, Norms and Behavior. *Journal of Alcohol & Drug Education*, 49 (2), 67-83.

³ Smith, G.T., & Miller, T.L., (1999, November). Children's perceptions of parental drinking: The eye of the beholder. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60(6), 817.

⁴ American Council for Drug Education. (n.d.) Facts for Parents: At What Age Should I Discuss Drug Use With My Child? Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.acde.org/parent/Ageaprop.htm>

⁵ Bonino, S. & Cattelino, E. (1999, Mar.) The Relationship Between Cognitive Abilities and Social Abilities in Childhood: A Research on Flexibility in Thinking and Co-Operation with Peers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 23(1), 19-36.

⁶ U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Svs. Administration. (n.d.) Good Decisions: More than a Feeling. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/gdecisions.aspx>

⁷ Beck, K., Boyle, J., & Boekeloo, B. (2004, May). Parental Monitoring and Adolescent Drinking: Results of a 12-month Follow-up. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 28(3), 272-279.

⁸ Lenhart, A. (2005, March) Protecting Teens Online. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Filters_Report.pdf

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Svs. Administration. (n.d.) Set Rules. In *Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy and Drug Free Family Guide*. <http://family.samhsa.gov/set/>

¹² Adults Most Common Source of Alcohol For Teens, According To Poll Of Teens 13-18. (2005, August 8) Alcohol-PolicyMD.com. http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/press_room/Press_releases/adults_give_youth_alcohol.htm

¹³ The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (2007, December) *Fact Sheet: Prevalence of Underage Drinking*. <http://camy.org/factsheets/index.pho?FactsheetID=5>

¹⁴ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2007) *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Educators*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General.

¹⁵ Jackson, C., & Henriksen, L (1999, May) Alcohol-Specific Socialization, Parenting Behaviors and Alcohol Use by Children. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60(3), 362-367.

¹⁶ Ross, V. (2004, Feb.) Depression, Anxiety, and Alcohol or Other Drug Use Among College Students. *Prevention Updates*, <http://www.higheredcenter.org/pubs/prev-updates/depression.html>

¹⁷ Quinnett, P.G., (1993) *The Tender Leaves of Hope*. Spokane, WA: QPR Institute.

¹⁸ The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (2003, Feb) *Teen Tippers: America's Underage Drinking Epidemic*. New York, NY: CASA. http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/379-teen_tippers.pdf

UNDERAGE DRINKING . . . START TALKING, KEEP LISTENING: THE SIX G's

These 6 questions can help you talk to your child about underage drinking.

- 1 Can you think of any **GENETIC** reasons that might put you at risk for developing alcohol problems?
- 2 Do any members of the **GROUP** you hang out with drink alcohol?
- 3 Has anyone ever offered to **GIVE** you alcohol or encouraged you to try drinking?
- 4 Have you ever been tempted to **GET** and try alcohol, or do you disapprove of drinking by young people?
- 5 Do you understand the **GREAT** dangers associated with underage drinking?
- 6 Do you feel you receive enough **GUIDANCE** about drinking?

For further information about underage drinking visit these web sites:

www.alcoholfreechildren.org

www.niaaa.nih.gov

www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

From: Heyman, Dr. Richard B, MD. (2007, Jun) "Combating Underage Drinking with the 6Gs." *Contemporary Pediatrics*, 24, (6). <http://www.suburbanpediatrics.org/pdf-files/6Gs-Galley.pdf>

THE SIX G's

GENETICS

- Recognize that family history of alcohol or drug problems increases a young person's risk of addiction.
- Help your child understand that, even without obvious family history, some people may have genes that put them at higher risk for developing alcohol dependence.

GROUP

- Know who your child's friends are, and ask if any of them drink alcohol.
- Know where your child hangs out and whether there is adult supervision.
- Ask your child what she and her friends do when they are together and what it takes for them to have a good time.

GIVE

- Ask your child what his opinion is of drinking.
- Let your child know that even though alcohol may be available (at home, at someone else's home, at school, at a party, etc.) you expect her NOT to drink.
- Encourage your child to avoid being with kids who drink and get away from the situation if someone is urging him to do so.

GET

- Find out if your child has ever thought about trying alcohol or has had even a single sip – or whether she is just totally against it.

- Periodically inquire about other risky behaviors, and let your child know that you expect him to make good choices and not to take chances, especially with alcohol.
- Help your child to develop strategies to be able to say “NO” without feeling self-conscious.

GREAT

- Remind your child of the great dangers associated with underage drinking – both short term (accidents, school failure, unwanted pregnancy, etc.) and long term (health, social, economic, legal, etc.)
- Understand and talk with your child about how alcohol affects the young developing brain compared to its effects on adults who drink responsibly.
- Use the media to point out examples of alcohol's dangers – car crashes, drug busts, irresponsible behavior, etc.
- Help dispel the media myths that drinking is glamorous and that drinkers are more likeable, attractive, sexy and fun than non-drinkers.

GUIDANCE

- Re-enforce the fact that underage drinking is dangerous and illegal.
- Regularly remind your child about your hopes and expectations for your child around not drinking.
- Remind your child that, in fact, most kids don't drink, that the behavior is unacceptable and will result in significant consequences.

From: Heyman, Dr. Richard B, MD. (2007, Jun) "Combating Underage Drinking with the 6Gs." *Contemporary Pediatrics*, 24, (6). <http://www.suburbanpediatrics.org/pdf-files/6Gs-Galley.pdf>



CRAFFT

- 1 Have you ever ridden in a **C**ar driven by someone (including yourself) who was high or had been using alcohol or drugs?
- 2 Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to **R**elax, feel better about yourself, or fit in?
- 3 Do you ever use alcohol or drugs while you are by yourself **A**lone?
- 4 Do you ever **F**orget things you did while using alcohol or drugs?
- 5 Do your **F**amily or **F**riends ever tell you that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?
- 6 Have you ever gotten into **T**rouble while you were using alcohol or drugs?

Scoring: 2 or more positive items indicate the need for further assessment.

The **CRAFFT** is intended specifically for adolescents. It draws upon adult screening instruments, covers alcohol and other drugs, and calls upon situations that are suited to adolescents.

HOW TO FIND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES IN MAINE

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN MAINE

To find treatment services and support group meetings in your area, call the **Office of Substance Abuse, Information and Resource Center** at: **1-800-499-0027**

Print copies of the **Maine Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Treatment Services Directory and Support Groups for the State of Maine** may be ordered at **no cost** from the Information & Resource Center or access this information online at:

www.maineosa.org/help/directory.htm

online directory of licensed treatment agencies

www.maineosa.org/help/selfhelp.htm

listing of support group meetings throughout Maine

OTHER RESOURCES

Statewide Crisis Hotline (Dept. of Health & Human Services)

1-888-568-1112

24-hour crisis hotline

211 Maine

Dial 211 or visit www.211Maine.org

24 hour referral for assistance.

The Women's Project:

Portland: **1-800-611-1588** TTY: **(207) 874-1013**

Bangor: **1-800-611-1779**

Statewide, free and confidential service for women. Will work with women to address barriers that affect recovery.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Maine Office of Substance Abuse
Information and Resource Center

Phone: **1-800-499-0027** or **(207) 287-8900**

TTY: **1-800-606-0215**

Fax: **(207) 287-8910**

Email: osa.ircosa@maine.gov

Web: www.maineosa.org
www.maineoparents.net



The Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age or national origin in admission or access to or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Maine Human Rights Act. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator, SHS #11, Augusta, ME 04333; (207) 287-4289 (V) or (207) 28703488 (V), TTY: 800-606-0215. Individuals who need auxiliary aids or services for effective communication in programs and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator. This information is available in alternate formats upon request.

Caring.. Responsive.. Well-Managed.. We Are DHHS.